

Media release

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Hospital Pharmacists urge focus on workforce strategy, hospitals and digital health in welcoming ACT Budget

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) has welcomed yesterday's Australian Capital Territory (ACT) [Budget 2022-23](#), handed down by Chief Minister and Treasurer Andrew Barr, which features \$390 million of new healthcare investment across hospital care, primary care and systems capacity.

SHPA Chief Executive Kristin Michaels welcomed the additional \$29.8 million investment to deliver more elective surgeries, as COVID-19 continues to delay elective surgeries and add to chronically long waiting lists and times.

'SHPA understands that Hospital Pharmacists were excluded from the \$16.4 million budget measure to expand allied health services, given the *Expanding pharmacy services at The Canberra Hospital* measure from Budget 2019-20 remains in progress. However, it is essential that commensurate funding for surgical and perioperative pharmacists is provided under the elective surgery announcement.

'It is only through funding these expert Hospital Pharmacist positions that safe and quality comprehensive pharmacy care – as outlined in SHPA's [Standard of practice in surgery and perioperative medicine for pharmacy services](#) – can be delivered for patients receiving surgery, to prevent avoidable hospital readmissions.'

The ACT Budget 2022-23 also included an announcement for a health workforce strategy and continued investment in the territory-wide Digital Health Record (DHR).

Ms Michaels says, 'The pharmacy sector is currently undergoing a transformation, with new and emerging expert pharmacist roles in sectors such as aged care and digital health, and experienced pharmacists leaving the sector completely amid burnout and dissatisfaction.

'We welcome the announcement of a much-needed health workforce strategy. Further investment for [Foundation Residencies](#) and [Advanced Training Residencies](#) for Hospital Pharmacists will help ensure a more sustainable Hospital Pharmacy workforce in the ACT, as they deliver twin benefits of accelerated career development and improved recruitment and retention.

'It is also exciting to see the Budget papers confirm implementation of the territory-wide DHR from late 2022 to improve patient-centred care. We reiterate [our call for Clinical Informatics Pharmacists](#) to be funded at every hospital to complement the work undertaken by the DHR pharmacy team, provide local governance, troubleshoot issues, identify and treat risks.'

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About SHPA

The Society of Hospital Pharmacists of Australia (SHPA) is the national, professional organisation for the 6,100+ Hospital Pharmacists, and their Hospital Pharmacist Intern and Hospital Pharmacy Technician colleagues working across Australia's health system, advocating for their pivotal role improving the safety and quality of medicines use. Embedded in multidisciplinary medical teams and equipped with exceptional medicines management expertise, SHPA members are progressive advocates for clinical excellence, committed to evidence-based practice and passionate about patient care.

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